SMOLLETT's

CELEBRATED ODE

TO

INDEPENDENCE.

Thy ſpirit, Independence, let me ſhare!
Lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye,
Thy ſteps I follow with my boſom bare,
Nor heed the ſtorm that howls along the ſky.

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ODE TO INDEPENDENCE.

STROPHE.

THY ſpirit, Independence, let me ſhare!
Lord of the lion-heart and eagle eye,
Thy ſteps I follow with my boſom bare,
Nor heed the ſtorm that howls along the ſky.
Deep in the frozen regions of the north,
A goddeſs violated brought thee forth,
Immortal Liberty, whoſe look ſublime
Hath bleach'd the tyrants cheek in every varying clime.
What time the iron-hearted Gaul,
With frantic Superſtition for his guide,
Arm'd with the dagger and the pall,
The ſons of Woden to the field defy'd;
The ruthleſs hag, by Weſer's flood,
In Heaven's name, urg'd the infernal blow;
And red the ſtream began to flow—
The vanquiſh'd were baptiz'd with blood! *

* Baptiz'd with blood.]—*Charlemagne obliged four thouſand Saxon priſoners to embrace the Chriſtian religion, and immediately after they were baptiz'd, ordered their throats to be cut.—Their prince, Vitikind, fled for ſhelter to Gotrick, King of Denmark.*

ANTISTROPHE.

The Saxon prince in horror fled
From altars ſtain'd with human gore;
And Liberty his routed legions led
In ſafety to the bleak Norwegian ſhore.
There in a cave aſleep ſhe lay,
Lull'd by the hoarſe reſounding main;
When a bold ſavage paſs'd that way,
Impell'd by Deſtiny, his name Diſdain.
Of ample front the portly chief appear'd;
The hunted bear ſupply'd a ſhaggy veſt,
The drifted ſnow hung on his yellow beard,
And his broad ſhoulders brav'd the furious blaſt.
He ſtopp'd; he gaz'd; his boſom glow'd,
And deeply felt the impreſſion of her charms;
He ſeiz'd th' advantage Fate allow'd,
And ſtraight compreſs'd her in his vig'rous arms.

STROPHE.

The Curlieu ſcream'd, the Tritons blew
Their ſhells to celebrate the raviſh'd rite;
Old Time exalted as he flew,
And Independence ſaw the light.
The light he ſaw in Albion's happy plains,
Where under cover of a flowering thorn,
While Philomel renew'd her warbled ſtrains,
Th' auſpicious fruit of ſtol'n embrace was born.—
The mountain Dryads ſeiz'd with joy
The ſmiling infant, to their charge conſign'd;
The Doric muſe careſs'd the fav'rite boy;
The hermit Wiſdom ſtor'd his opening mind.
As rolling years matur'd his age,
He flouriſh'd bold and ſinewy as his ſire;
While the mild paſſions in his breaſt aſſuage
The fiercer flames of his maternal fire.

ANTISTROPHE.

Accompliſh'd thus he wing'd his way,
And zealous rov'd from pole to pole,
The rolls of right eternal to diſplay,
And warm with patriot thoughts th' aſpiring ſoul.
On deſert * iſles 'twas he that rais'd
Thoſe ſpires that gild the Adriatic wave,
Where Tyranny beheld amaz'd
Fair Freedom's temple, where he mark'd her grave.
He ſteel'd the blunt Batavian's arms,
To burſt the Iberian's double chain †;
And cities rear'd, and planted farms,
Won from the ſkirts of Neptune's wide domain.
He with the generous ruſtics ſat,
On Uri's rocks, in cloſe divan, ‡;
And wing'd that arrow, ſure as fate,
Which aſcertain'd the ſacred rights of man.

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*On deſert iſles.]—*Although Venice was built a conſiderable time before the æra here aſſign'd for the birth of Independence, the republic had not yet attained to any great degree of power and ſplendour.*

†To burſt th' Iberian's double chain.]—*The Low Countries were not only oppreſs'd by grievous taxation, but likewiſe threatened with the eſtabliſhment of the Inquiſition, when the Seven Provinces revolted, and ſhook off the yoke of Spain.*

‡On Uri's rocks.]—*Alluding to the known ſtory of William Tell and his aſſociates, the fathers and founders of the confederacy of the Swiſs Cantons.*

STROPHE.

Arabia's ſcorching ſands he croſs'd*,
Where blaſted nature pants ſupine,
Conductor of her tribes aduſt,
To Freedom's adamantine ſhrine;
And many a Tartar hord forlorn, aghaſt†!
He ſnatch'd from under fell Oppreſſion's wing;
And taught amidſt the dreary waſte
Th' all-cheering hymns of Liberty to ſing.
He virtue finds, like precious ore,
Diffus'd thro' every baſer mould,
Ev'n now he ſtands on Calvi's rocky ſhore,
And turns the droſs of Corſica, to gold‡.
He, guardian genius, taught my youth
Pomp's tinſel livery to deſpiſe:
My lips by him chaſtis'd to truth,
Ne'er paid that homage which the heart denies.

*Arabia's ſcorching ſands.]—*The Arabs, rather than reſign their Independency, have often abandoned their habitations and encountered all the horrors of the deſert.*

†And many a Tartar hord.]—*From the tyranny of Jenghis Khan, Timur Bec, and other eaſtern conquerors, whole tribes of Tartars were uſed to fly into the remoter waſtes of Cathay, where no army could follow them.*

‡And turns the droſs of Corſica.]—*The noble ſtand made by Paſchal Paoli and his aſſociates againſt the uſurpation of the French King, muſt endear them to all the ſons of Liberty and Independen*

ANTISTROPHE.

Thoſe ſculptur'd halls my feet ſhall never tread,
Where varniſh'd Vice and Vanity combin'd,
To dazzle and ſeduce, their banners ſpread,
And forge vile ſhackles for the free born mind.
Where Inſolence his wrinkled front uprears,
And all the flowers of ſpurious Fancy blow;
And Title his ill-woven chaplet wears,
Full often wreath'd around the miſcreant's brow;
Where ever-dimpling Falſehood, pert and vain,
Preſents her cup of ſtale Profeſſion's froth;
And pale Diſeaſe, with all his bloated train,
Torments the ſons of Gluttony and Sloth.

STROPHE.

In Fortune's car behold that minion ride,
With either India's glittering ſpoils oppreſs'd:
So moves the ſumpter-mule, in harneſs'd pride,
That bears the treaſure which he cannot taſte.
For him let venal bards diſgrace the bay,
And hireling minſtrels wake the tinkling ſtring;
Her ſenſual ſnares let faithleſs Pleaſure lay;
And all her jingling bells fantaſtic Folly ring;
Diſquiet, Doubt, and Dread ſhall intervene;
And Nature, ſtill to all her feelings juſt,
In vengeance hang a damp on every ſcene
Shook from the baleful pinions of Diſguſt

ANTISTROPHE.

Nature I'll court in her ſequeſter'd haunts
By mountain, meadow, ſtreamlet, grove or cell,
Where the pois'd lark his evening ditty chaunts,
And Health, and Peace, and Contemplation dwell.

There Study ſhall with Solitude recline;
And Friendſhip pledge me to his fellow-ſwains;
And Toil and Temperance ſedately twine
The ſlender cord that fluttering Life ſuſtains:
And fearleſs Poverty ſhall guard the door;
And Taſte unſpoil'd the frugal table ſpread;
And Induſtry ſupply the humble ſtore;
And Sleep unbrib'd his dews refreſhing ſhed
White-mantled Innocence, ethereal ſprite,
Shall chace far off the goblins of the night;
And Independence o'er the day preſide,
Propitious power! my patron and my pride.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

LYRIC POETRY imitates violent and ardent paſſions. It is therefore bold, various, and impetuous. It abounds with animated ſentiments, glowing images, and forms of ſpeech often unuſual, but commonly nervous and expreſſive. The compoſition and arrangement of parts may often appear diſordered, and the tranſitions ſudden and obſcure; but they are always natural, and are governed by the movements and variations of the imitated paſſion. The foregoing ode will illuſtrate theſe obſervations.

The ode may be divided into three parts. The poet ſets out with a brief addreſs to Independence, imploring his protection. He ſees, in idea, the high object of his adoration, and, tranſported by an ardent and

irreſiſtible impulſe, he rehearſes his birth, education, and qualities. He proceeds, in the ſecond place, to celebrate his office and moſt renowned atchievements; and returns, at the end of the third ſtrophe, to acknowledge with gratitude the protection he had requeſted, and the power of Independence in preſerving him untainted by the debaſing influences of Grandeur, and the admiration of vain Magnificence.—Animated with this reflection, and conſcious of the dignity annexed to an independent ſtate of mind, he inveighs againſt thoſe "Minions of Fortune" who would impoſe upon mankind by the oſtentation of wealth, and the parade of pageantry.

In the laſt antiſtrophe the poet deſcends from his enthuſiaſm; he is leſs impetuous; the illuſtrious paſſions that animated and impelled him are exhauſted; but they leave his mind full of their genuine and benign influences, not agitated and diſordered, as if their tendency had been vicious, but glowing with ſelf-approbation, ſoft, gentle, and compoſed.